

May 31, 2007

The Honorable Michael N. Castle
1233 Longworth House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Castle:

I write on behalf of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) regarding the funding for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) programs. It is Council's understanding that Congress is in the process of finalizing the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education Appropriations bill. SCPD strongly encourages you to promote line-item funding of \$30 million to adequately support NIDRR's TBI-related research programs, including the TBI Model Systems of Care, and increase funding to \$30 million for TBI Act Programs. Regarding the latter, the allocation of \$30 million should include \$15 million for the HRSA State Grant Program, \$6 million for the HRSA P & A Program, and \$9 million for CDC activities and research related to TBI. Federal funding for these important TBI programs has deteriorated over the last several years, as any increases have not been sufficient to keep up with inflation. The urgent need for increased federal support for a national TBI public health infrastructure and TBI research is further heightened by the increasing recognition of TBI as the signature wound of the war in Iraq.

Each year in the United States, an estimated 1.4 million people sustain a TBI and 80,000 to 90,000 people experience the onset of long-term disability associated with a TBI. Direct medical costs and indirect costs (such as lost productivity) of TBI are estimated at \$60 billion annually. This number does not take into account returning military service personnel with TBI. At Least 5.3 million individuals have a long-term disability as a result of TBI. Therefore, it is critical to increase funding for TBI programs and research, and SCPD encourages you to support a fully funded, balanced, coordinated and responsible public policy that provides for basic and applied research; acute inpatient and outpatient treatment and rehabilitation; long-term disease management; and appropriate, accessible social services and supports following neurotrauma.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chair
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

